

Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount: Part 4

Matthew 5:9-16

I. Blessed are the Peacemakers (v 9)

- A. To understand what Jesus means when He says peacemakers, we must remind ourselves that, as we most of these, the world's definition of Peace and the Biblical definition of Peace are two different concepts:
1. For the world, it would be the absence of conflict: If everything is quiet, there are no disturbances, and no wars, that would be peace: That is what most have in mind when they say they pray for "world peace"
 - a) And so operating from that definition someone might say that Jesus is talking about those people who have the natural gift of being able to settle disputes, or negotiate and bring about compromise:
 2. But when the Bible speaks about the peace, it talks about having peace in the midst of conflict and turmoil: It is a peace that is different from what the World offers:
 - a) Jesus would say to His disciples in John 14:27 "*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you*"
 - b) Jesus is speaking of making relationships whole again: The peacemaker of Matthew 5:9 is not simply seeking to make men right with each other, but is seeking to make them right with God:
 - (i) Any other peace would be meaningless by comparison: No matter how much tranquility or prosperity it brought, if it wasn't based on men being reconciled with God, what true value does it have?
- B. And so those who are truly peacemakers must first be at peace with God themselves:
1. In Romans 5:2-5, Paul describes that even though he and other Christians were going through tribulations, they boasted in those trials: He lists the benefits as perseverance, proven character, and hope that doesn't disappoint:
 - a) And the key to being able to do this is in v 1, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- b) In further encouraging the saints at Rom, Paul would write to these Christians who were already at Peace with God, to as it depended on them be at peace with all men (Romans 12:18)
 - (1) There is no better way to be at peace with all men than to preach the gospel to those around us:
 - (2) Paul would write to the Ephesians that everything Christ did in His sacrifice for us was to bring us peace (Ephesians 2:13-17)
- C. Jesus says the blessing on the peace makers is to be called “sons of God”
 - 1. Men and women who are in right relationship with God, take the peace that Christ gives to them and let it translate into compassion, meekness and forgiveness, and let that dictate the way they interact with all men, there is no better description of such people than children of God
 - a) If the world sees these people has enemies, it is through no fault of their own: They are pursuing what is truly peace:

II. The World’s Reaction: (V 10-12)

- A. I tend to imagine that out of all of the parts of Jesus’ sermon so far, this had to surprise the audience more than any other: The ones who make for peace are going to be the ones who are persecuted!
 - 1. After Jesus finishes telling them what citizens of this Kingdom will look like, he now explains how the world will receive them:
 - 2. One would think that the world would be overjoyed to have such a people in it:
 - a) People who practice true humility: People who are selfless and spend their time looking to take care of others:
 - b) And yet the world not only rejects them, they do it in the extreme: Persecuting, insulting, slandering! This was certainly not expected
 - 3. And yet Jesus has never tried to hide what it would be like to follow him from potential disciples: Both here and in other places Jesus would tell them to give serious thought to what it would cost them to follow after Him

- a) In places like Matthew 8 and Luke 14, He would be very candid that following Jesus could cost you your place to live, separate you from your family, cost you more than you counted, and even bring you to your death!
- b) Jesus did this on purpose: He didn't want any clueless disciples who had their faith destroyed by the shock of rejection: He wanted them and us to know that when these things happen, it isn't a mistake or a fluke; it is the way Jesus said it would be

B. And so what is it that causes the world to be so hateful towards such a beneficial people?

- 1. It isn't that they have some secret agenda and are really out to swindle people
- 2. They aren't practicing some sort of secret immorality either:
- 3. It is nothing vicious or unseemly, It is simply that they have made the choice to live righteous lives in an unrighteous world!

a) They are too different from the world, and too much like Jesus: If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. *"If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. -John 15:18-20*

b) The way they live when contrasted to the world is like light and darkness:

When one is held up to the other you cannot help but see the difference:

(1) All of the good qualities of a kingdom citizen only serve to show in contrast how ugly and sinful the world is:

(2) It doesn't have to be that way, but most of the world will refuse to change:

And for those they stubbornly hold on to their sense of self and pride, they cannot help but feel judged by the life choices of a Christian, even if they never open their mouth against them: As Jesus said in John 3:19

C. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

1. And so Jesus says to rejoice at this opposition and resistance: It doesn't mean that you are doing it wrong, but rather than something is right:
2. It reveals that the same spirit and character that defined the Lord can be seen in them
 - a) Paul would say in Philippians 1:28 not to be alarmed *by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake*, : and so we should rejoice for being able to suffer for Christ
 - b) But more than that, we rejoice and continue to have peace because we know that the suffering is not in vain:
 - (1)As mentioned earlier in Romans 5, and also in James 1, we can embrace suffering because it proves our character: Paul would say in 2 Corinthians 4:17 that these temporary light afflictions were working for us “*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*”
 - c) If what I treasure is truly that which is in heaven, then no amount of threat by the world can shake it: